

CUSTOM MANUFACTURE OF TILES FOR USE WITH PREEXISTING MASS-MANUFACTURED TILES

Abstract

A decorative tile set of nonuniformly-shaped tiles (tiles with non-parallel sides and/or non-perpendicular corners) is manufactured for interlocking installation adjacent uniformly-shaped tiles, i.e., adjacent to tiles having parallel sides and/or perpendicular corners, as in standard flooring tiles such as laminate flooring planks. A sacrificial bed having a planar upper bed surface is provided, and trenches are cut in the sacrificial bed to define areas on the upper bed surface which at least substantially correspond to tile boundaries. At least one workpiece from which the tiles are to be cut is then provided atop the sacrificial bed with its finished face closely held against the sacrificial bed. The workpiece is then cut to produce tile blanks bounded by tile blank boundaries, with the tile blank boundaries being outwardly spaced from the desired tile boundaries by an offset distance. The tile blanks are then cut to produce the tiles by forming either male or female interlocking structure on selected tile blanks. Any male interlocking structure (such as a tongue) is defined in the offset regions of the tile blanks, while any female interlocking structure (such as a groove) is defined in portions of the tile blanks within their tile boundaries and their offset regions. The tiles within the tile set may then be installed simultaneously with the installation of the uniformly-shaped tiles, or may instead be installed as an insert within preinstalled uniformly-shaped tiles, as by removing selected uniformly-shaped tiles and inserting the tile set within the space previously occupied by the selected uniformly-shaped tiles.